

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5727

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SEOUL 1496

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: ROK-US NUCLEAR COOPERATION

REF: (A) STATE 38217, (B) SEOUL 1185, (C) STATE 44639

SUMMARY: AT US/ROK WORKING-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS HELD FEBRUARY 25-27 ROKG PROPOSED AGENDA OF SEVEN BASIC ROK MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MOST) AND ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KAERI) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT LATE APRIL WASHINGTON MEETING. PROPOSALS WHICH FOCUS ON COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS ARE ORGANIZED INTO THREE FINANCIAL CATEGORIES. A FOURTH CATEGORY ADDRESSES SPECIFIC FUNDING REQUESTS. THROUGHOUT DISCUSSIONS ROK SIDE STRESSED NEED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ROK PROJECTS AND LEFT LITTLE DOUBT THAT SUCCESS OF APRIL MEETING WILL BE MEASURED BY SENIOR ROKG OFFICIALS IN TERMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT WHICH TEAM SUCCESSFUL IN SECURING. ONLY NON-NUCLEAR TOPIC WHICH ROK APPARENTLY PLANS INCLUDE IN OFFICIAL AGENDA INVOLVES GENERAL AGREEMENT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION, ALTHOUGH MOST MINISTER CHOI MAY QUERY U.S. TEAM UNOFFICIALLY ON POSSIBILITY OTHER NON-NUCLEAR COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE. IN ADDITION TO COVERING POINTS IN DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTIONS (REF A AND C) EMBOFFS EXPRESSED CLEAR RESERVATIONS ABOUT AVAILABILITY "SOFT LOAN" FUNDS BEING REQUESTED, NOTING U.S. HAD PHASED OUT OF AID BUSINESS IN KOREA. ROK ADVISED THAT ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER WILLING PARTICIPATE AND ROK SIDE SUGGESTED TENTATIVE WASHINGTON MEETING

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DATES OF APRIL 27-28 OR 28-29. VISIT OF NRC COMMISSIONER MASON

ALSO NOTED AND ROK SIDE RESPONDED LFAVORABLY. END SUMMARY.

1. ROK TEAM COMPRISED MOST DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR PLANNING CHON SANG-KUN, MOST AEB DIRECTOR YI PYONG-HUI, MOST TECHNICAL COOPERATION COORDINATOR HONG CHAE-KI, KAERI VICE PRESIDENT FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS CHU CHAE-YANG, AND KAERI PROJECT COORDINATION CHIEF YI HAE; U.S. SIDE REPRESENTED BY POLCOUNS, ERDA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, AND EMBASSY COMMERCIAL OFFICER. AEB DIRECTOR YI LED ROK PRESENTATION BY STATING THAT HIS UNDERSTANDING OF WORKING-LEVEL MEETING WAS THAT IT OPPORTUNITY FOR ROK TO SECURE INITIAL U.S. REACTION TO KOREAN PROPOSALS IN ORDER THAT ROK AGENDA FOR APRIL MEETING CAN MATCH AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE U.S. CONCEPT OF PROPER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION. EMBOFFS MADE CLEAR FROM OUTSET THAT WHILE WE WISHED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE, EMBASSY TEAM ACTING ONLY AS CONDUIT AND WOULD REFER ALL QUESTIONS ON AGENDA AND SUBSTANCE TO WASHINGTON.

2. YI STATED THAT FIRST ROK PROPOSAL (PROPOSAL ONE) WOULD BE FOR APRIL MEETING TO CODIFY A KOREA-US JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE FOR COOPERATION IN PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR AND OTHER ENERGY

TECHNOLOGY MATTERS. ROK STATED THAT THEY WILL SEEK U.S. AGREEMENT TO MAKE APRIL MEETING, AFTER THE FACT, FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THIS JOINT COMMITTEE. THEY AGREE BILATERAL GROUP WOULD BE AT SUB-MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND SUGGESTED IT CONSIST OF TEN SENIOR MEMBERS (FIVE EACH GOVERNMENT WITH U.S. SIDE COMPRISED OF STATE, ERDA, NRC, AND POSSIBLY ANL OFFICIALS. ROKS ALSO PROPOSED THAT STANDING COMMITTEE, ONCE FORMED, DEVELOP BALANCE OF THIS PROPOSAL AND DESIGNATE ROLE AND MAKE UP OF ITS WORKING-LEVEL AND SECRETARIAT GROUPS.

3. ROK MADE SIX ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS FOR US-ROK NUCLEAR OR SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, PLACED THESE PROPOSALS IN CATEGTRIES BY TYPE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED, AND THEN IDENTIFIED FOUR OF THE SIX PROPOSALS IN ORDER OF ROK PRIORITY REQUIREMENT. THE SIX PROPOSALS INCLUDE:

A) PROPOSAL TWO: COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NUCLEAR POWER TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING THREE SUBPROPOSALS OF:

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(1) LWR SAFETY AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE PHYSICS, HYDRAULICS, STRUCTURES, RADIATION SAFETY AND ASSOCIATE ACTIVITIES AND REGULATORY/LICENSING AGREEMENT INCLUDING QA; (2) EXPANSION OF KAERI NUCLEAR TRAINING CENTER INCLUDING PURCHASE OF PWR SIMULATOR, TRAINING OF INSTRUCTORS, AND AUDIO VISUAL TRAINING AND; (3) ASSISTANCE FROM USG IN PROVIDING FOR COMMERCIAL ASSOCIATION WITH U.S. NUCLEAR COMPONENT MANUFACTURES TO NUCLEATE KOREAN INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIER CAPABILITY IN MANUFACTURING HIGH GRADE

NUCLEAR COMPONENTS.

B) PROPOSAL THREE: ESTABLISHMENT KAERI SISTER LAB RELATIONSHIP WITH ANL TO BE FUNDED FROM U.S. GRANT/SOFT CREDIT ASSISTANCE AT \$50,000/YR.

C) PROPOSAL FOUR: REQUEST FOR USG ENCOURAGEMENT TO US-ROK COMMERCIAL-SCALE JOINT VENTURE FUEL FABRICATION PROJECT AND ASSISTANCE IN IDENTIFYING U.S. PARTNER FOR EQUITY AND/OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LWR FUEL FAB TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER.

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D) PROPOSAL FIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF URANIUM ORE PROCESSING AND CONVERSION PILOT PLANT BY WHICH ROK CAN MINE, MILL, REFINES, AND CONVERT TO UO₂ ITS URANIUM RESERVES CLAIMED "CONFIRMED" AT 8 MILLION TONS LEVEL.

E) PROPOSAL SIX: ASSISTANCE TO EXPANSION OF KAERI CANCER RESEARCH HOSPITAL.

F) PROPOSAL SEVEN: GENERAL AGREEMENT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION TO INCLUDE DISCUSSION ON U.S. SOFT LOAN ASSISTANCE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A KOREAN CULTURAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO IMPROVE GRADUATE LEVEL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ROK.

4. THREE FINANCIAL CATEGORIES INTO WHICH ROKS PLACE ABOVE SEVEN PROPOSALS AS FOLLOWS (WITH PROPOSAL PLACEMENT NOTED):
CATEGORY I, NAIFINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED, PROPOSALS ONE AND

THREE (NOTE: ROKS CONSIDER \$50,000 PER YEAR FOR SISTER LAB "INSIGNIFICANT"); CATEGORY II, SOFT LOAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED, PROPOSALS TWO, FIVE, SIX, SEVEN; CATEGORY III, COMMERCIAL TYPE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED, PROPOSAL FOUR. IN APRIL MEETING ROK TEAM PROPOSED TO BRIEF U.S. SIDE ON PROPOSALS IN CATEGORIAL SEQUENCE NOTED ABOVE AND THEN IN FINAL DISCUSSION OR AGENDA CATEGORY IV, CATEGORY V, ROK WILL IDENTIFY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS, EXPLAIN PROPOSAL PRIORITIES, AND SEEK U.S. RESPONSE. AS EXPLAINED IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION BY MOST ATOMIC ENERGY BUREAU DIRECTOR LEE PYONG HUI FEBRUARY 27 (DAY CONFIDENTIAL

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FOLLOWING TWO FULLY ATTENDED WORKING LEVEL SESSIONS), ROK SPECIFIC PROJECT PRIORITIES ARE: FIRST PRIORITY - COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NUCLEAR POWER TECHNOLOGY (PROPOSAL NUMBER TWO); SECOND PRIORITY - CONSTRUCTION OF URANIUM ORE PROCESSING AND CONVERSION PILOT PLANT (PROPOSAL NUMBER FIVE); THIRD PRIORITY - EXPANSION OF KAERI CANCER RESEARCH HOSPITAL (PROPOSAL NUMBER SIX); FOURTH PRIORITY - GENERAL AGREEMENT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION INCLUDING FUNDING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF KOREAN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.

5. CATEGORY IV FINANCIAL REQUESTS ARE AS INDICATED FOR COMBINATION SOFT AND COMMERCIAL LOANS. SOFT LOANS CONTEMPLATED WOULD BE AT 2 OR 3 PERCENT FOR LONG TERMS OF UP TO 30 YEARS, INCLUDING 10 YEARS GRACE. SUMMARY OF FIGURES AS FOLLOWS:

PROPOSAL TWO (FIRST PRIORITY): NUCLEAR SAFETY ANALYSIS AND LICENSING \$4.1 MILLION; EXPANSION OF KAERI TRAINING CENTER \$8.0 MILLION; LOCALIZATION OF NUCLEAR POWER PROJECTS \$1.2 MILLION; PROPOSAL TWO TOTAL \$13.3 MILLION TO BE FUNDED BY AID-TYPE DEVELOPMENTAL LOAN. PROPOSAL THREE: \$50,000 ANNUAL FUNDING REQUESTED FOR XIX YEAR PERIOD, CONCESSION TYPE LOAN, TERMS AS ABOVE.

PROPOSAL FOUR (THIRD PRIORITY): \$3.0 MILLION CONCESSIONAL LOAN, TERMS AS IN PROPOSAL TWO ABOVE.

PROPOSAL FIVE: (SECOND PRIORITY): URANIUM ORE PROCESSING PILOT PLANT \$2.5 MILLION AND URANIUM CONVERSION PILOT PLANT \$2.0 MILLION, PROPOSAL FIVE TOTAL \$4.5 MILLION, TERMS AS ABOVE.

PROPOSAL SIX: \$14.0 EX-IM TYPE COMMERCIAL LOAN TO BE ASSEMBLED BY U.S. JOINT VENTURE PARTNER OR U.S. TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIER WITH ASSISTANCE USG AT UNSPECIFIED FUTURE DATE.

PROPOSAL SEVEN: ALTHOUGH SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL AGREEMENT COOPERATION REQUIRES NO FUNDING MOST HAS INCLUDED UNDER THIS PROPOSAL A REQUEST FOR \$20.0 MILLION IN AID-TYPE DEVELOPMENTAL FUNDING FOR A KOREAN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION WHICH ROK SIDE CLAIMS

WOULD BE MATCHED BY \$30.0 MILLION IN ROKG FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THESE PROPOSAL DEFINITIONS, U.S. TEAM FIRST
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MADE GENERAL COMMENTS BASED ON REF A AND C GUIDANCE, THEN OFFERED
SUGGESTIONS TAILORED TO INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS. POLCOUNS EMPHA-
SIZED FOLLOWING POINTS: (A) AT NO TIME DURING KRATZER-CHOE
DISCUSSIONS DID USG ENCOURAGE ROK TO EXPECT U.S. FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE TO ITS NUCLEAR RESEARCH PROGRAM, NOR DID USG INDICATE
ANY WILLINGNESS TO GO BEYOND SCOPE OF DISCUSSION REFLECTED IN
THE SUMMARY RECORD OF DISCUSSION, (B) EMBASSY CONSIDERS ANY NEW
USAID TYPE OF ASSISTANCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY AND, IN ANY EVENT,
CURRENTLY NO U.S. SOURCE OF THE TYPE OF SOFT CREDIT ASSISTANCE
REQUESTED HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED, (C) ROK REQUESTS CONTAINED IN
WORKING-LDVEL PROPOSALS FOR EXTENSIVE SOFT LOAN, AS OPPOSED TO
NORMAL EXIM CREDIT ASSISTANCE WAS NOT ANTICIPATED EITHER BY
EMBASSY SEOUL OR BY WASHINGTON, AND THUS ROK EMPHASIS ON AID
DEVELOPMENTAL LOAN-TYPE FUNDING WILL COME AS SURPRISE TO
WASHINGTON, AND (D) WHILE WASHINGTON AGENCIES AS WELL AS EMBASSY
TAKING POSITIVE AND RESPONSIVE APPROACH TO APRIL MEETING, WE ARE
ENGAGED IN DEVELOPING LONG RANGE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP IN
SCIENTIFIC AREA AND WE WISH TO PROCEED WITH "DELIBERATE" SPEED.

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7. POLCONS AND ERDA REP TOKYO COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WERE AS FOLLOWS: A) PROPOSAL ONE: USG WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS FORMATION OF STANDING COMMITTEE AND EMBASSY WOULD FORWARD ROK SUGGESTIONS FOR WASHINGTON CONSIDERATION; B) PROPOSAL TWO: WHILE ERDA AND OTHER CONCERNED USG ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVESTIGATING POSSIBILITIES OF INCREASED NUCLEAR INFORMATION TRANSFER, MUCH OF THIS TECHNOLOGY LIES IN PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR AND THUS ROK WOULD HAVE TO INITIATE ITS OWN CONTACTS IN MANY OF THESE AREAS. WITH REGARD TO SAFETY-REGULATORY REQUESTS, POLCONS NOTED PROPOSED VISIT OF NRC COMMISSIONER MASON SCHEDULED FOR MID-MARCH AND RELATED REF C INFORMATION THAT COMMISSIONER WOULD COME PREPARED TO DISCUSS KOREAN DRAFT ON THIS TOPIC SUBMITTED TO NRC IN FEBRUARY. ROKS WELCOMED VISIT. EMBASSY OFFERED NO SPECIFIC COMMENT ON PROPOSAL FOR EXPANSION OF KAERI NUCLEAR TRAINING CENTER: C) PROPOSAL THREE: PER REF. C, EMBASSY STATED WASHINGTON IN FINAL STAGES PREPARING LETTER TO MINISTER CHOE OFFERING REESTABLISHMENT OF KAERI-ANL SISTER LAB RELATIONSHIP. ERDA REP NOTED IN CONNECTION WITH ROK REQUEST FOR \$50,000/YR SOFT LOAN FUNDING FOR SISTER LAB OPERATION THAT AS ROK PREVIOUSLY INFORMED ERDA HAD NO FUNDS FOR THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY. ROK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS FACT CONTAINED REQUEST THAT AID-BLOCK TYPE GRANT OR CREDIT BE ARRANGED FOR THIS FUNDING; D) PROPOSAL FOUR: POLCONS SAID USG HAD NOT BLOCKED PAST ROK EFFORTS OBTAIN COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP IN FUEL FABRICATING, WOULD ADVISE ROK ON OPPORTUNITIES AND WOULD CONFIRM TO INTERESTED U.S. FIRMS FACT THAT ROK DESIRES PURCHASE TECHNOLOGY IN THIS AREA AND THAT USG SUPPORTED THIS IN PRINCIPLE; E) PROPOSAL FIVE: EMBOFFS QUESTIONED NECESSITY

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OF PILOT PLANT OF THIS MAGNITUDE (\$4.5 MILLION) AND FACT THAT ROK WAS PREPARING MOVE AHEAD IN THIS AREA EVEN THOUGH BY ROKS OWN ADMISSION DEPOSITS HAD NOT BEEN FULLY SURVEYED, AND EMPHASIZED POINT THAT, AGAIN, ORE PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY AND ACTIVITY WAS ALMOST EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF U.S. PRIVATE SECTOR. HIGH PRIORITY ASSIGNED THIS PROJECT BECAME EVIDENT WITH EXPLANATION IN PARAGRAPH 6 BELOW; F) PROPOSAL SIX: NOTING THAT THIS WAS REQUEST FOR U.S. FUNDING (\$3 MILLION) TO EXPANSION OF ONGOING PROJECT, ERDA REP MENTIONED THAT ROK ADVISED TO SEEK OUT NON-NUCLEAR RELATED U.S. ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN CANCER RESEARCH, SUCH AS NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH FOR COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE. FACT THAT THIS PROPOSAL'S ONLY NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP WAS THAT IT PART OF KAERI ORGANIZATION WAS MENTIONED AND ROK IMPLIED THAT DESIRE TO REHABILITATE KAERI IN ALL OR ANY OF ITS PROJECTS KEY CONSIDERATION IN ALL REQUESTS; G) PROPOSAL SIX: POLCONS STATED THAT WHILE WASHINGTON PREPARED DISCUSS GENERAL AGREEMENT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION, ROK (ACTUALLY MOST) DESIRE TO INCLUDE IN WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS UNDER THIS TOPIC EXTENSIVE FUNDING REQUESTS FOR KOREAN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF) WAS ILL-ADVISED. NSF DID NOT RELATE TO NUCLEAR DISCUSSIONS AND CONFLICTED WITH U.S. DESIRE TO LIMIT TOPICS TO THOSE IN-

CLUDED IN EARLIER KRATZER-CHOI SUMMARY RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS.

8. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH POLCONS, KAERI VICE PRESIDENT CHU PROVIDED INSIGHT INTO KOREAN REQUIREMENTS AND NEGOTIATING GAME PLAN. CHU MADE EMOTIONAL APPEAL FOR "RESCUE FUNDING" OF URANIUM PILOT PLANT TO ALLOW KAERI SALVAGE SOME OF ITS EXISTING FUNDING COMMITMENT AND TO PUT TO WORK 100 CHEMISTS AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS HIRED IN ANTICIPATION OF FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT -- WHICH INCIDENTALLY HE CLAIMED HAD BEEN FUNDED AT \$34 MILLION, 12 YEAR LOAN, 6 YEAR GRACE PERIOD AT 6.5 PERCENT INTEREST.

9. IN DISCUSSION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF MEETING ROKS WERE TOLD WASHINGTON MEETINGS WOULD INCLUDE ACTING SECRETARY KRATZER. ROK STATED THAT UNDER PRESENT PLANNING, ROK GROUP WOULD INCLUDE MINISTER CHOE, KAERI PRESIDENT YUN YONG-KU, POSSIBLY AEB DIRECTOR YI, MOFA AND ECONOMIC PLANNING BOARD OFFICIALS AS WELL AS ONE OR TWO ROK EMBASSY WASHINGTON SENIOR OFFICERS. KOREANS SAID TWO DAYS SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR MEETING AND PROPOSED APRIL 27-28 OR APRIL 28-29. ROK QUERIED U.S. TEAM ON MAKEUP OF USG APRIL DISCUSSIONS GROUP. POLCONS STATED THAT ROK CONFIDENTIAL

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PROPOSALS AS OUTLINED ABOVE WOULD BE CABLED AND POUCHED TO WASHINGTON SOONEST AND WOULD ASK FOR EARLY REPLY. ROK REQUESTED THAT AT CONCLUSION OF APRIL MEETING, JOINT PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT BE MADE HIGHLIGHTING ANY COOPERATIVE UNDERSTANDING REACHED TO INCLUDE FORMATION OF JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE. EMBOFFS ALSO AGREED TO CONVEY THIS REQUEST TO WASHINGTON.

10. EMBASSY POUCHING TO EA/K THREE COPIES OF ORIGINAL ROK PROPOSED "CONTENTS OF THE AGENDA" FOR APRIL MEETING WHICH INCLUDES DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.

11. COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.
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